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BIBLE STUDY ON THE GRADUATE LEVEL

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EVER since the initiation of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Pacific Union College in the summer of 1934, our educational system has provided for the study of the Bible on the graduate level. Recently Loma Linda University began to offer graduate studies in religion, providing a welcome companion institution to our Seminary. For three full decades Adventist Bible teachers and ministers in increasingly large numbers have been engaged in formal Bible study that presupposes a college education. After this length of time it seems fair to ask: What has been the effect of such a program upon the church? What have we learned from this experience that may give direction to our thinking and planning for the future of our Bible study?

In answering these questions we must first consider the purposes for which the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary was established and has continued to exist during these decades. Briefly stated, its purposes are two: first, to provide advanced professional training for Seventh-day Adventist ministers and Bible teachers within the context of our denomination with its particular concerns, point of view, and goals; and second, to provide an institution with a qualified staff and adequate library in which young Biblical scholars may receive basic training and more advanced scholars may pursue research in Biblical studies.

What is the result of three decades of such endeavor? The most lasting impact doubtless has been on the teaching of religion in our colleges and academies. Today most full-time Bible teachers in Adventist colleges in North America (78 per cent) hold at least the Master of Arts degree from the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary, while many (37 per cent) have completed the full three-year course leading to the Bachelor of Divinity. For half a century before the founding of the Seminary, Adventist college Bible teachers were unable to receive formal preparation for their work, in the Adventist context, beyond the level to which they themselves were required to bring their students. There were many outstanding Bible teachers during this time, men who were wise and learned beyond the bounds of their formal education, and others who had earned higher degrees elsewhere, often in fields not directly connected with the areas in which they

were called to teach. Without their contribution Adventist theological education would not stand where it does today. But during the past three decades our college Bible departments increasingly have been enriched with men whose formal training has been specifically in theology, religious history, Biblical languages, and archeology. The rapid growth of college enrollments since World War II has made such training even more imperative.

Every year the Seminary also sees some seventy-five to one hundred young men go through its doors into pastoral-evangelistic ministry. They too have had the opportunity of a year's study in which they have been able to specialize completely in religious concerns on a post-graduate level. In a world where a college education is more and more the basic training for any kind of specialization, a minister who is truly to lead his people must have an intellectual preparation commensurate with the times. Thus from the professional standpoint Seminary training for both ministers and Bible teachers is a *must*.

Not only is the Seminary a professional school; it is also an institution for *research* by both students and teachers. This function of the institution distinguishes it most clearly as a center of graduate study. From the very beginning, classes in the Seminary and projects undertaken by students have worked at the growing edge of theological, linguistic, and historical problems. Both classroom discussion and graduate research have always been characterized by the realization that we must work on the frontiers of thought if our teaching and our learning are to remain living and relevant. Notable examples of this attitude may be found in the work of the late Dr. Frank H. Yost, who in the 1940's led his students in the production of a series of Master's theses on varying aspects of the history of the Sabbath. These taken together provide a rich body of source material in readily available form. Similarly, since 1950 Dr. Siegfried H. Horn has produced a continuous stream of articles, books, and reference works presenting the latest findings of archeology as they enlighten our understanding of the Old Testament. Recently Dr. Kenneth A. Strand has published several books embodying the results of his research in the translations of the Bible made at the time of the Reformation. In the practical field the

work of Prof. Charles E. Wittschiede over the past decade has been in many respects a pioneer project, pushing the frontiers and gaining new ground in the area of pastoral counseling and practical psychology as it is understood and employed within the Adventist frame of reference. The work of all these men is illustrative of what many other teachers and students in the Seminary have accomplished over the years. The most important development in this area in the past twelve months has been the launching of the first scholarly journal to be published by Seventh-day Adventists, *The Andrews University Seminary Studies*. This journal has already introduced itself widely in the scholarly religious world. On the one hand, it offers a medium for the publication of articles embodying research on topics particularly relevant to Adventist concern, and on the other, it presents these concerns to the scholarly world at large. The journal, of course, is not limited to articles bearing directly on Seventh-day Adventism but is intended to be an instrument for the encouragement of theological scholarship in general throughout our church.

Only as our theological study rolls back frontiers in all directions can we grow in all directions. Only as we are dedicated to the acceptance of truth, wherever we may find it, will truth come to us. The honest pursuit of this goal is the real purpose of Bible study on the graduate level.

The "New Venture" Illustrated

(From page 13)

Favored are those whose motives are pure, for they will be admitted to God's presence.

Happy are the peaceful, for they shall be members of God's family.

Favored are those who lose possessions or suffer pain by turning from sin, for they shall receive the supreme possession—the kingdom.

III

1. Contrasts in 5:13-48.

13. Salt of the earth—or trodden underfoot.

15. Not under a bushel—but on a stand.

17. Not to abolish—but to fulfill.

19. Relax a commandment—does and teaches them.

21ff. You have heard—but I say. (Each admonition is a contrast.)

29f. One member—the whole body.

37. Yes—or no.

45. Evil—good, just—unjust.

The "light of the world" figure is an interesting example of a movement from the general to the particular. The first statement pictures the citizen of the kingdom as the light of the world (the sun). The second narrows this to a smaller area: "a city set on a hill cannot be hid" (night lights of a hilltop village). The final step contrasts the figure to light in the house (a lamp). Citizens of the kingdom are to light the world, the community about them, and the house in which they live. Christians

will act like Christians wherever they are: in the home, in the community, and in the world at large.

2. Amplification and modification of the law.

Five laws are dealt with in 5:25-48: You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not swear falsely; an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemies.

The first three were amplified. The last two were rejected and replaced by contrasting requirements. It should be noted that the ones amplified were laws of God stated in the Ten Commandments, but those which were changed were laws of man. Thus did Jesus substantiate what He had declared in verses 17-20: He had come to fulfill the law and the prophets, and the righteousness of the citizens must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. In the kingdom of heaven the laws of God are fulfilled, and the laws of man are replaced.

Chart Showing the Old and New Law Concerning Enemies

You have heard (old law) BUT I say	You shall love hate	your neighbor your enemy
	[you shall] love pray	your enemies for your persecutors
SO THAT you may be		
Heavenly Father demonstrates the new law	FOR He makes to rise	sons of your Father in heaven his sun on the evil on the good
	[He] sends	rain on the just on the unjust
FOR IF you love		
Tax collectors & Gentiles demonstrate the old law	you have tax collectors do	those who love you what reward? the same
	IF you salute	your brethren only what more than others? the same
You must do as the heavenly Father does	Gentiles do THEREFORE you must be	perfect
	AS your heavenly Father is	perfect

In this context perfection is equated with impartial love.

The assignment in *The Desire of Ages* affords an excellent summary of the true character of God and His law as revealed in Jesus. It also serves to highlight the application of Matthew 5 to the life that would be patterned after Jesus and that would grow toward God-likeness.

¹ *The Journal of True Education*, April, 1963, pp. 5, 6.

² Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1946), vol. 1, p. 35.

³ James Orr (ed.), *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1945), vol. 1, p. 487.

A noble, all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. . . . It is formed by hard, stern battles with self.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 331.